

**Senate Joint Resolution**

**No. 5**

**Introduced by Senator Yee**

*(Coauthors: Senators Aanestad, Ackerman, Alquist, Ashburn, Battin, Cedillo, Cogdill, Correa, Cox, Ducheny, Dutton, Harman, Hollingsworth, Kehoe, Kuehl, Lowenthal, Machado, Maldonado, Margett, McClintock, Migden, Negrete McLeod, Oropeza, Padilla, Perata, Ridley-Thomas, Romero, Runner, Scott, Steinberg, Torlakson, Wiggins, and Wyland)*

March 5, 2007

Senate Joint Resolution No. 5—Relative to benefits for Filipino Americans who fought in World War II.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SJR 5, as amended, Yee. Filipino veterans: benefits.

This measure would request that the Congress and the President of the United States enact the Filipino Veterans Equity Act of 2007.

Fiscal committee: no.

- 1 WHEREAS, On July 26, 1941, in anticipation of war with Japan,
- 2 President Roosevelt issued an Executive Order calling over 200,000
- 3 Filipino soldiers to serve in the United States Armed Forces in the
- 4 Far East (USAFFE); and
- 5 WHEREAS, Ten hours after Pearl Harbor was attacked, the
- 6 United States military bases in the Phillippines were bombed,
- 7 causing the war to spill onto the Filipino people; and
- 8 WHEREAS, On March 27, 1942, Congress passed Title 8 of
- 9 the Second War Powers Act, which provided that noncitizens who
- 10 served in active duty in the United States Armed Forces during

1 World War II shall be granted United States citizenship, meaning  
2 that every USAFFE soldier had the right to equal treatment under  
3 the law; and

4 WHEREAS, On April 9, 1942, the United States surrendered  
5 the Philippines, leaving 75,000 USAFFE and regular soldiers to  
6 the Bataan Death March where close to 10,000 died along the  
7 drudge to P.O.W. camps; and

8 WHEREAS, Even after the American surrender, Filipinos  
9 continued to resist, gathering thousands more soldiers and forming  
10 guerilla units, who, in coordination with United States command,  
11 conducted operations, collected intelligence, and helped prepare  
12 for the American return; and

13 WHEREAS, On September 2, 1945, Japanese military command  
14 surrendered the Philippines back to American forces ending World  
15 War II on the islands, and Philippine nationals who served in the  
16 war began filing for naturalization at the United States Embassy  
17 in Manila; and

18 WHEREAS, Filipino men and women served courageously in  
19 the fight for freedom and democracy during World War II, under  
20 the leadership of General Douglas MacArthur; and

21 WHEREAS, After the war, the New Philippine Scouts were  
22 formed to help reestablish United States authority in the Pacific,  
23 causing thousands more Filipino soldiers to be called to serve the  
24 United States; and

25 WHEREAS, In November of 1945, adjudication of applications  
26 for naturalization of Filipino veterans were stopped, per order of  
27 the United States Department of State and the Commissioner of  
28 the Immigration and Naturalization Service; and

29 WHEREAS, In December of 1945, Congress passed legislation  
30 amending the immigration and naturalization law, setting a deadline  
31 of December 1946 for Filipino veterans applying for citizenship;  
32 and

33 WHEREAS, On February 18, 1946, Congress enacted the 1946  
34 Rescission Act, which denied World War II Filipino veterans,  
35 including the USAFFE, the guerillas, and the New Philippine  
36 Scouts equal status as American veterans, which stripped them of  
37 equal recognition, compensation, and benefits; and

38 WHEREAS, In October of 1990, the 1990 Immigration Act was  
39 passed, granting United States citizenship to Filipino veterans,  
40 which allowed 24,000 Filipino World War II veterans, in their 70s

1 and 80s to receive citizenship, but who were still denied equal  
2 status as American veterans; and

3 WHEREAS, California has long advocated for veterans,  
4 including continuation of the \$226 per month disability benefit  
5 provided by the California Veterans Cash Benefit Program, and

6 WHEREAS, The Filipino Veterans Equity Act of 2007 (H.R.  
7 No. 760, 110th Cong., 1st Sess., P. 1150 (2007); Sen. No. S. 57,  
8 110th Cong., 1st Sess., p. S37, (2007)) would provide benefits for  
9 veterans, including healthcare, disability pensions, and burial  
10 expenses, which are much needed for many of the 24,000 surviving  
11 Filipino veterans and their families; now therefore, be it

12 *Resolved by the Senate and the Assembly of the State of*  
13 *California, jointly,* That the Legislature of the State of California  
14 respectfully requests the President and Congress of the United  
15 States to enact the Filipino Veterans Equity Act of 2007.

16 *Resolved,* That the Secretary of Senate transmit copies of this  
17 resolution to the President and Vice President of the United States,  
18 to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the Majority  
19 Leader of the Senate, and to each Senator and Representative from  
20 California in the Congress of the United States.